

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3200

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 4463

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MO

SUBJ: UNFP/RABAT NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

REF: RABAT 4445

1. AS REPORTED REFTEL, UNFP/RABAT NATIONAL COUNCIL MET FOR TEN HOURS SEPT 15. MEETING GIVEN NO PUBLICITY IN SEMI-OFFICIAL OR OPPOSITION PRESS AND PARTY SOURCES SAID GATHERING TOOK PLACE WITHOUT SPECIFIC PERMISSION OF GOVERNMENT. SOURCES SAID THAT MEETING'S RESULTS WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLICATION WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS.

2. AMONG DECISIONS TAKEN DURING MEETING WERE FOLLOWING:
(A) TO CHANGE NAME OF PARTY FROM NATIONAL UNION OF POPULAR FORCES TO SOCIALIST UNION OF POPULAR FORCES. CHANGE COMPLETES SPLIT WITH UNFP/CASABLANCA; (B) TO HOLD USFP CONGRESS IN DECEMBER; (C) TO PERMIT ONLY HIGHEST LEVELS OF PARTY TO SPEAK PUBLICLY IN ITS NAME; AND (D) TO PERMIT PARTY MEMBERS NO CONTACT WITH "OUTSIDE ELEMENTS" (READ UNFP EXILES) UNLESS SUCH CONTACTS ARE CLEARED WITH LEADERSHIP. SOURCES SAID LAST TWO POINTS WERE IMPORTANT IN THAT, UNKNOWN TO LEADERSHIP, THERE HAD BEEN CONTACTS BETWEEN OUTSIDE ELEMENTS AND PARTY MEMBERS ABOUT WHICH LEADERS JAILED IN 1973 WERE INTERROGATED AND TORTURED.

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3. ON QUESTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, ONE SOURCE SAID THAT

SOME HAD BEEN LEGITIMATELY TRIED AND SENTENCED AND IMPLIED THAT USFP WOULD NOT TREAT THEM AS CAUSE CELEBRE. PARTY MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THOSE DETAINED WITHOUT TRIAL, SOURCE ADDED, AND SAID THAT ATMOSPHERE WOULD BE IMPROVED IF THEY WERE RELEASED. HOWEVER, IMPLICATION WAS STRONG THAT SUCH RELEASES WERE NOT PRECONDITION TO TALKS WITH PALACE ON OTHER POLITICAL SUBJECTS.

4. NEW PARTY CONTINUED RECOGNIZE EXISTENCE NATIONAL FRONT, ONE SOURCE SAID. HOWEVER, DESPITE BOUABID'S ATTENDANCE AT ISTIQLAL CONGRESS AND ISTIQLAL'S CALL FOR REVIVAL OF FRONT, TASK OF REVITALIZING IT WOULD BE "VERY DIFFICULT."

5. SOURCES SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE HAD UNDOUBTEDLY IMPROVED, THERE WAS NO ONGOING DIALOGUE WITH PALACE. BOUABID'S SERVICE AS EMISSARY ON SAHARA HAD BEEN DONE WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED "AS NATIONAL DUTY," AND THERE WAS NO CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS SERVICE AND RELEASE OF USFP LEADERS. PARTY REMAINED WILLING TO NEGOTIATE SHOULD PALACE WISH DO SO, BUT FOR MOMENT WAS MORE INTERESTED IN REBUILDING ITS ORGANIZATION.

6. COMMENT: MEETING GOOD INDICATOR OF HOW MUCH POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE HERE HAS CHANGED. SOURCES' DENIALS NOTWITHSTANDING, SEEMS TO US THAT USFP LEADERSHIP MUST HAVE TAKEN SOUNDINGS WITH REGIME BEFORE HOLDING MEETING AND HAVE RECEIVED TACIT AGREEMENT TO RESUME POLITICAL ACTIVITY. INDEED, USFP'S EXISTENCE REPRESENTS SMALL TRIUMPH FOR PALACE'S DIVIDE AND CONQUER POLICY P THAT RABAT INTELLECTUALS, WHO WERE KEY ELEMENT IN OLD UNFP, NOW FORMALLY SEPARATED FROM LABOR AS REPRESENTED BY UMT. COMING MONTHS WILL WITNESS MAJOR EFFORT BY USFP TO CAPTURE AS MUCH OF OLD UNFP APPARATUS AS POSSIBLE.

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